

Friends of Jubilee Country Park

Newsletter Autumn 2018



Welcome to our autumn update

by John Bruce

Last year, Sue Folkes announced her intention of stepping down as chairman of the *Friends of Jubilee Country Park* and true to her word, she did so at our AGM in March. Sue had served as chairman for the last four years, but her contribution extended far beyond that role and our immense thanks go to her for all the work she has done. She has designed and set up our website, established databases and electronic filing systems and managed our membership records. Sue has represented us at *Bromley Friends Forum*, dealt with *Bromley Council*, and liaised with *idverde* and many outside bodies. If that weren't enough, she has also helped to raise considerable funds by growing and selling plants and by making her delicious jams and marmalade.

Sue has nurtured and developed a number of important projects including the *Woodland Trail* and the *Digital Nature Trail* and you can read all about them in the following articles.

The Woodland Trail, which is just being finalised and is largely wheelchair friendly, will be a marked path through Thornet Wood, starting at the car park. This trail joins our *Nature Trail*, *Orienteering Course* and a section of *The London Loop* and is a welcome addition to the signed walks in our park.

Following a successful recruitment drive after our open meeting in December, we have expanded the committee to its full complement of roles and the following members were duly elected: Zara Jolly (Secretary), Peter Runacres (Treasurer), Ros Martin (Events), Sylvia Chubbs (Membership), Jennie Randall (Projects Director), Sarah Coulbert (Social Media), Penny Russell (Events) and John Bruce (Chair). Subsequently, Tony Ruffle and Sue Folkes were co-opted for particular roles; Tony, for the monthly emailing of events and Sue, for her expertise and her invaluable computer skills (she doesn't get away that easily!).

We have had another busy and successful year of activity, but one area we really want to address is how we build awareness of our fabulous park and consequently increase the membership of *The Friends*. Our *Magnificent Meadows Day* was one such event, when we welcomed many new visitors to the park, and we are also keen to continue building links with our neighbouring schools. John Bruce has been leading informative, guided walks to groups of pupils, teachers and parents from our local schools. *St James' Junior School* is already an enthusiastic participant, but we need to do more and your help is needed. Would your child's school or your local community group be interested in taking part? If so, please contact us to find out more.



Sarah Coulbert, John Bruce and Mark Shearer from Project Dirt check out the Woodland Trail (Photo by Sue Folkes)

The *Digital Nature Trail* is an exciting, joint project with *Bromley High Junior School*, which brings modern technology up close to nature, with a seasonal audio-visual guide to the park and the species you can find in it. You can read all about it in Sue's article which follows.

We know that a lot of local people still haven't discovered the delights of the park, and many of those who do enjoy using the park haven't yet joined up, so please spread the word and invite your friends, neighbours and colleagues to join and support us in our work to conserve the park for everyone to enjoy for generations to come. Also, if you have any suggestions for events, or contacts who would be willing speakers, or if you can lend a hand in any way, please contact any member of the committee.

Finally, thanks to all our members for your continued enthusiasm and support for the work of the *Friends*, and a warm welcome to our new members. As autumn fast approaches, we will soon be sending out membership renewals, so please make sure you renew your subscription in good time for next year. It is still only £5 per household to ensure that you are kept up to date with all our news and a varied programme of walks, talks and events is promised for next year-full details are at the back of this newsletter. Why not do it right now and please remember to let us know if you're moving house.

The importance of our wildflower meadows

by Ros Martin



Bird's foot trefoil

As well as being a quintessential sight of summer, the value of meadows to our wildlife cannot be overstated- a single, healthy meadow can be home to over 80 species of wild flowers, compared to most modern agricultural pasture which generally has fewer than a dozen species. However, meadows are much more than just pretty flowers; they are unrivalled havens for wildlife. Over 1370 species of insects eat meadow plants, they are home to pollinating butterflies, bees and hover-flies and the soil is full of ants, fungi, worms and beetles.

Jubilee Country Park has several wildflower meadows with flowers including corky-fruited water dropwort, clover, knapweed, lucerne, chicory (our emblem flower) and bird's foot trefoil, a plant which can support over 160 species of insect. We also have butterflies including the meadow brown, gatekeeper, large and small white and the common blue, as well as a variety of bees including the white-tailed bumblebee. The red-tailed bumblebee and honey bees have also been found in the meadows this summer.

The British conservation charity, *Plantlife*, is working both nationally and internationally to save threatened wild flowers, plants and fungi. They are at the forefront of saving, restoring and creating meadows and spearheaded the *Save our Magnificent Meadows* project to halt the steady decline of flower rich meadows in the UK. Over 97% of the meadows that existed in the 1930s have been eradicated – a loss of 7.5 million acres of wild flower grassland.

As part of *Plantlife's* bid to make people more aware of the importance and benefits of our wild flower meadows, they launched *National Meadows Day* four years ago and this annual event is celebrated on the first Saturday of July. To do our part and mark the occasion, *The Friends of Jubilee Country Park* held a family day near the picnic site in the park this year. We were joined by the Bromley branch of *RSPB*, *Friends of the Earth* and Emma Pooley from *London Wildlife Trust*, who shared some fascinating information about the *Urban Urchin* programme which is monitoring hedgehogs in the London area.

Despite the unprecedented heat and the quarter finals of the World Cup, many families came along and learnt about the wildlife and the plants of the meadows and enjoyed a guided walk led by John Bruce. There was also a variety of arts and crafts activities for children and a wonderful face painter who transformed faces into bees, butterflies and dragonflies.

We would like to thank everyone who came along and our friends from *RSPB*, *Friends of the Earth* and Emma Pooley, as well as the many volunteers from *The Friends of Jubilee Country Park* who braved the heat to help celebrate our wonderful wild flower meadows.

Jubilee Country Park leapfrogs into the Digital Age

by Sue Folkes

If you're keen to get your children outdoors and having fun while learning, but find that they are glued to their screens, then this could be the perfect answer; a digital nature trail.

Jubilee Country Park's nature trail features 16 observation points, each with an individual QR (Quick Response) code. By using a smart phone to scan the code and with a click or two, you will be taken to a unique audiovisual presentation detailing the wildlife specific to that observation point.



You can test your reader on the QR post shown above

The child-friendly information includes new, seasonally oriented information which complements the original trail. The QR trail has been created by the *Friends of Jubilee*



Teachers, pupils and volunteers taking part in the recording of the digital nature trail

Park, led by Sue Folkes working with pupils from Bromley High Junior School guided by Sheetal Kowalczyk, their science teacher, and Dr Judy John of *Bromley Biodiversity Partnership*, who provided knowledge and expertise for the content. Phase 1, *Autumn*, is now available, while work is progressing on a summer trail for next year and plans are in place to create a spring version for 2020.

Sheetal Kowalczyk says: "This is a really exciting community collaboration. The *FoJCP* are very aware of the need to engage the younger

generation in looking after our environment. The project has involved our ten-year old pupils visiting the nature reserve with the *Friends*, taking photographs for the trail and learning about the variety and inter-dependence of nature."

Sue Folkes says: "So far, more than 80 children, teachers, parents and *Friends* have participated in the exercise. We hope the trail will be used by everyone to help educate our young people in the importance of conserving the richness of our local nature reserve."

To access the Digital Nature Trail

The trail follows the existing nature trail route, starting in Tent Peg Lane car park. Each presentation is accessed using a QR reader on your smartphone. This can be downloaded free from your usual App store. I have tried several readers and am currently using "QR code reader – No Ads" from Sustainable App Developer. You will need access to the internet and preferably, sound too. If you don't have a QR reader, the URL is also printed on the plaque. You will be able to choose a presentation to suit the season, currently autumn is available. The presentation is designed for a normal smartphone and can be enlarged to fit your screen.



Some of the pupils from Bromley High Junior School working on the Digital Nature Trail

The Jubilee Country Park Conservation Work Group by Ros Martin and Jennie Randall

If you want to get out in the fresh air, get fitter, learn new skills (or utilise existing ones) and above all, have fun, why not join the *Friends of Jubilee Country Park's* Monday morning conservation group? You don't have to have had any previous experience and full guidance and training is provided, with everyone working at their own pace.

We get involved in a wide variety of differing tasks throughout the year: scrub clearance, hedge laying, monitoring flora and fauna, fence repairing, removing saplings and brambles from the meadows, cutting back overhanging vegetation and litter picking to name a few!

Seeing what you can achieve as part of a team is immensely rewarding and it also gives a great sense of community spirit. The appreciative comments which we frequently get from park users concerning our



work are a great encouragement. We also discover much, through practical work, about how we can improve the environment for both wildlife and people. It's not all work either, we stop for a cuppa, biscuits and a chat half way through the morning and often have lunch together when our task is completed.

The conservation team stop for a well-deserved cuppa. New members are very welcome so please get in touch and join us

It really is a very enjoyable and rewarding way to start the week, so if you're interested in joining us or would like to find out more, please call Jennie Randall on 07840 542261, or Andrew Harby, our Community Manager from *idverde* for Bromley Council on 07464 989094 or email us at jubileecountrypark@yahoo.co.uk.

You can also follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/jubileecountrypark. The schedule of work and meeting places can be found on noticeboards in the park, on our website www.jubileecountrypark.btck.co.uk or, if you're not online, call Jennie and one can be posted out to you. It would be great if you could join us!

Calling all green-fingered members! Please can you help with our fundraising?

One of the mainstays of our fundraising has been the sale of plants at the Petts Wood and Keston Spring Fairs. We need gardeners to help maintain stocks (and other perennials and annuals). If you can help by growing on seeds, plugs or cuttings please contact Sue Folkes or any committee member.

A sad goodbye to Angela Ruffle, one of our original members

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the recent, unexpected death of Angela Ruffle. Angela, along with husband Tony, was a founding member of the *Friends of Jubilee Country Park*, an enthusiastic supporter and a regular member of the butterfly transect team. She will be greatly missed and we send our sincere condolences to Tony and the family.



Angela Ruffle, one of our founding members and a dearly valued friend

Fond memories of Katherine Collins, one of our oldest friends

by Jennie Randall

Age is no barrier to joining a *Friends* work group and Katherine Collins was a wonderful example of this. Katherine joined our Monday work group when she was a mere 85 years old. She got involved with great enthusiasm, and swiftly became a much-loved member of the team. Lopping and litter-picking were her two specialities, both of which she undertook with gusto. In addition, she had a great love of nature and was fascinated by the flora and fauna of *Jubilee Country Park*. Everyone who knew her would agree that one word summed up Katherine's personality, and that word is *delightful*. She was a true lady, always sweet-natured and smiling, and an absolutely unique character.

As time went by, Katherine's family felt she should rein in her activities. With considerable reluctance, Katherine decided that she could no longer attend the work party. She gave us a very kind donation and left, or so we thought! We were all very sad to say goodbye to her and missed her cheery presence. However, three weeks later Katherine turned up on a Monday morning, dressed for work. "I was having so much fun with the Friends, I decided to come back," she explained. Katherine stayed with us for another couple of years until ill-health resulted in her moving to a local care home. She still joined us occasionally over several years, on the annual Wheelchair Walk and at talks and social events. When this became impossible, I continued to visit her at Queen Elizabeth House. She often reflected on the happy times she'd spent with the *Friends*, which clearly meant a great deal to her. Katherine was a dear and good friend, who will be missed very much.



Katherine Collins, one of our oldest friends
January 1919-May 2018

A special date for your diary

On Friday 7th June 2019, there will be an illustrated talk on the Life of the Hare by Russell Miles at 2pm in the Garden Room, St Augustine's Church, Southborough Lane, Bromley BR2 8AT. Refreshments will be served before the start of the talk. Entry is free but a donation of £3 towards the cost of running the event and the work of the Friends would be welcomed.





Friends of Jubilee Country Park Dates for your Diary

October 2018 to April 2019

The Friends of Jubilee Country Park is a voluntary organisation to help manage the protection and conservation of nature in the park for the benefit of wildlife and people.

To contact us on the day of an event please call 07840 542261 or 07956 801761

Volunteers meet every Monday at 10am (excluding Bank Holidays and the month of August) to help with the management of the park under the guidance of Andrew Harby, our site manager from *idverde* for *Bromley Council*. The work programme and meeting point can be found on notice boards in the park, by calling us on 07840 542261 or on the *volunteer* page of our website www.jubileecountrypark.btck.co.uk.

Every Friday throughout the year - Walking for Health.

Meet at 2pm at Tent Peg Lane car park, off Crest View Drive, Petts Wood BR5 1BY for a gentle stroll around Jubilee Country Park (and sometimes beyond) lasting approximately 60 – 75 minutes. Organised by the Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support.

October 2018

Wednesday 10th 'Lichens – what they are, where they're found and how to identify them'

Dr Ishpi Blatchley of the British Lichen Society will tell us about these fascinating organisms which come in many sizes, colours and forms.

Meet in the Garden Room, St. Augustine's Church, Southborough Lane, Bromley BR2 8AT at 7.30pm. Refreshments will be served before the start of the talk. Entry is free but a donation of £3 towards the cost of running the event and the work of the Friends would be welcomed.

Tuesday 16th Join us for a walk from Petts Wood to Five Arch Bridge, Foots Cray Meadows.

This is a very pleasant walk of about 4 miles following the London Loop through Petts Wood and Scadbury Park. Meet at Tent Peg Lane car park, off Crest View Drive, Petts Wood BR5 1BY at 10am. Bring a picnic or stop at Sidcup Place for lunch. Walk back to Petts Wood, return by public transport or continue to Bexley village, a further 3 miles.

November 2018

Wednesday 28th Trevor Weeks of East Sussex Wildlife Rescue Animal Service will talk about the work of this charity which is devoted to rescuing ill, injured, trapped or distressed wild animals. The talk by Trevor, who helps to run the charity with other volunteers, promises to be a most interesting one.

Meet in the Garden Room, St. Augustine's Church, Southborough Lane, Bromley BR2 8AT at 2pm. Refreshments will be served before the start of the talk. Entry is free but a donation of £3 towards the cost of running the event and the work of the Friends would be welcomed.

December 2018

Sunday 30th Winter Walk

Join us for a walk around Jubilee Park led by John Bruce. Duration approximately 1 hour. Meet at Blackbrook Lane car park, BR2 8AY (near the entrance to Bromley High School) at 10.30am. Please wear footwear suitable for rough or muddy terrain. Well behaved dogs are welcome.

January 2019

Thursday 17th Join us for a **Quiz Night** in the Garden Room, St Augustine's Church, Southborough Lane, Bromley BR2 8AT at 7.30pm led by Jennie Randall, assisted by Christine Berkshire. A fun social event to raise funds for the work of the Friends of Jubilee Country Park. Nibbles and tea and coffee provided – you're welcome to bring your own drinks too. Teams of up to 6 people – make up a team, or come along on your own, or with others, and make up a team on the night. No need to book. Entry is £5 per person. For further information call 07840 542261.

February 2019

Saturday 2nd Come along to find out more about the **Small Mammals that live in the woodlands and hedgerows of Jubilee Country Park**. Discover how they are an important part of the biodiversity of our local environment. Led by Steven Lofting, an expert in the wildlife of the Park. Meet at Tent Peg Lane car park, off Crest View Drive, Petts Wood BR5 1BY at 9am. **No dogs please.**

*** In the interest of the welfare of the small animals, the walk will not go ahead in bad weather. The decision will be made the day before so please call 07733 004248 to check ***

Saturday 23rd Coffee morning at Petts Wood Methodist Church, Queensway, Petts Wood BR5 1EB. Take a break from shopping and join us from 10.00am until noon for delicious homemade cakes and refreshments.

March 2019

Thursday 28th Join us at our annual AGM to find out more about the plans for the future management and preservation of Bromley's urban and country parks - in particular, why the partnership between *Bromley Council*, *The Friends of Jubilee Country Park* and the contractor for the Council is so important for future generations. The meeting will start at 7:30pm in the Garden Room, St Augustine's Church, Southborough Lane, Bromley BR2 8AT. Refreshments will be served at the start of the meeting.

Useful contacts:

The Friends of Jubilee Country Park work with *Bromley Council* solely in a conservation and preservation role. To report any of the following, please contact *Bromley Council's Customer Service Centre* by calling 0300 303 8658.

- Overflowing bins (dog waste and rubbish)
- Fallen or dangerous trees
- Anti-social behaviour
- Vandalism/graffiti
- Dog-related issues including dangerous dogs
- Maintenance issues such as uncut grass, damaged fences, gates, paths etc.
- Rubbish dumping

Contact details for the *Friends of Jubilee Country Park*

Web address: www.jubileecountrypark.btck.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/jubileecountrypark

Email: jubileecountrypark@yahoo.co.uk